

Drache Mitfahrer

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Summary: AU . Chapter Two . Isaac finally bonded to an overgrown lizard, though it's a tad small, and Garet finally grew a brain.

***Chapter 1*: Chapter One**

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Guide:

"Human speech"

- *Dragon mind speech (Telepathically)* -

'Human thought'

Human mind speech

- - Draconic Talk (Out loud) - -

Merchants, Dragonets, and Double-Crossing Snakes in the Grass

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The blizzard of two days ago had brought blankets of snow upon the small village. Usually, winter consisted of light snow, and gentle winds due to the valleys surrounding Vale, so the blizzard was quite a surprise for the village's inhabitants. Thankfully, the harvests have been reaped over a week ago, so the freak storm did not bring any loss. In fact, it brought more than its share of laughter, as children rolled around and played in the snow, creating snowmen and other snow-things.

Isaac examined the prints in the snow with a hunter's eye. Definitely deer tracks, and fresh too, judging by the depth

and the softness of the snow. He straightened up; brushing snow off his brown jacket made out of cow leather, and wound his scarf around his neck just a little tighter. The icy cold air gave the hunt an exciting feeling. He followed the hoof-prints, keeping a sharp eye out for any animal that may be out in the cold at this time of the day.

Isaac was fourteen years of age, two years from manhood, and just at the right age to be put into the hunting team. This was his first hunt, and he was taking this very seriously, determined to prove to his elders that he was worthy of manhood, as well as to bring back game for the feast tonight. It was the year-over festival, celebrating their successful harvest, and Isaac most certainly did not want to miss it.

He walked forward, carefully stepping so that he would make the minimal amount of sound, one foot in front of the other. Brushing bond hair from his eyes, he nocked an arrow onto his bow, and kept it there, walking cautiously. He turned at a sound just to the left of him, and stopped, freezing. The only sound he could hear was his own heart beating. Loosening the tension on his bow, he continued on, keeping an eye on the prints as well as an eye out for any other signs of life.

Suddenly, something jumped out of a nearby bush. Isaac instinctively whirled, and let loose his arrow. In his haste, he missed by an inch, drove into the snow, and the frightened rabbit bounded off out of sight. The hunter stood there for a few moments, hearing his own harsh breathing and his wildly beating heart, and relaxed, sighing. He found a half-rotted stump to sit down upon, berating himself for the loss of the rabbit. Any game would have been good.

After following the deer prints for another hour, Isaac looked up to the sky, wiping his brow with a gloved hand. The sun

was directly overhead, casting a bright glow upon the snow, which reflected off the light, making the forest much brighter than it really should be. Tracking a deer was hard work, he mused. Isaac had not seen any other wildlife other than the rabbit, and he knew that he should be heading back now, as he was too far into the forest, and it would definitely take too long for him to return if he continued on, and missing the festival was out of the question. Sighing dejectedly, he turned and started on his way back, when he heard the crackling of a stick. Whirling around, he nocked an arrow onto his bow instinctively, and held it ready.

With a practiced eye, he scanned his surrounding, his eyes widening at his unbelievable luck. There was a deer, just beyond a tall bush to his left. The light colored coat of the deer rippled as it moved, reaching down with its neck and pawing at the snow to get at the grass beneath the snow. Obviously, it had not seen him yet. Isaac figured that it had to be a male deer, judging from its small horns, placed delicately upon its head. He quickly crouched down, so that the deer would have no chance of seeing him, and shuffled to a position where he could get a clear aim at the deer. All his work had taken him to his moment, and he was not about to botch it.

Slowly, he pulled his arrow back, and let it fly. The arrow whistled from the bush where he was hiding, and straight into the deer's neck. The animal jumped up in surprise and pain, but quickly found itself dead, red blood spilling from its wound on its neck, staining the surrounding snow pink.

Unbelieving his good luck, Isaac was stunned for a few moments as he let the event sink in. He had bagged his first game, and a deer no less. It was not as plump as the fall deer, but it was still deer. He jumped up from his position in the bush, and ran forward, kneeling down next to the

animal. His azure eyes were alight with excitement. Wait until Gareth and the others see this!

Suddenly, he was struck with a dilemma. How was he to carry this deer all the way back to Vale?

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The festival was in full swing by afternoon. Isaac was enjoying himself immensely. Not only he had gotten many praises when he had gotten back with the deer, but the mayor had also paid him fifty gold coins for his trouble. It was hard to get deer nowadays as the days become colder and shorter. He fingered his money pouch with a happy grin, hearing the coins jingle within. Money was also hard to come by, his family was relatively poor, and he already had plans to spend it. Festivals did not come by often.

The deer had been the largest game that the whole hunting crew had brought back. Several other men had brought back deer as well, but none as large as his. He had run back down the trail, and found another hunter, who helped him carry down his prize. Isaac remembered the look on the person's face when he had proudly proclaimed that he had bagged a deer. He had enjoyed the surprised look immensely, and even more so the praises. The rich aroma of venison and walnuts wafted to where he stood, and he sniffed appreciatively, before heading over to get his share of the meal.

Suddenly, someone careened into him, and he gave a startled gasp, as a hand rustled his hair roughly. "Garet! Stop that, will ya?"

"What a way to greet your friend, Isaac," Came the response. The redheaded boy stopped messing up Isaac's hair, and tossed an arm over Isaac's shoulder in a friendly gesture. At

fourteen years of age, the same age as Isaac's, it was surprising that Gareth was a lot taller than Isaac, towering over the shorter blond boy. Gareth had always been big, both length-wise and width-wise and had been the recipient of many pranks and the butt end of many jokes. But the good-humored boy always took things lightly, joking along with people. Being Gareth's friend, however, Isaac knew that Gareth was a lot more mature than he looked like. It's just that he never bothered showing that side of him.

"You're no better yourself," Isaac snorted. But he felt inclined to slap his friend on the back, his glove making a loud noise when it came in contact with the other boy's jacket. Gareth winced playfully, pushing Isaac away.

"Hey, just an old greeting," He protested, holding up his hands. "By the way, I heard that you bagged yourself a deer. Are the rumors true?"

"Rumor nothing," Isaac snorted again, "I bagged the biggest deer you'll ever see in your entire life." He boasted, "So big, that it took two of us to carry it back."

"Humph, well I bagged something too," Gareth crossed his arms, puffing his chest out proudly.

"What?"

"A snowshoe hare," He announced loudly, poking at himself in the chest with his thumb. The taller boy was grinning from ear-to-ear, as he strutted along with Isaac to the festival. "Stuck my arrow in it before it could escape."

"It couldn't have run away anyways," Came a girl's voice, "It was already dead, frozen solid."

"Awww, Jenna," Gareth pouted playfully, "you're ruining all our fun. Isaac did not need to know that."

"Riiight..." The red-haired girl appeared seemingly out of nowhere, dressed in her best winter robe. She looked flustered and was slightly red in the face, probably due to the glow of the bonfire at the center of the ring where the festival was taking place. Jenna was thirteen, a year younger than both of the boys, but equally as feisty and scarier than she should be. She was the third member of their little group. There used to be four of them, Felix, Jenna's brother, but he had been taken away when they were young, taken away by King Alex when he did a search for suitable candidates for the dragons at his citadel. They had never seen him again, and though they missed him, they got along without him just as well. The there friends gathered together and got in line for food as Jenna spoke again.

"He just stuck an arrow in it to make it look as though he bagged it, and then told everyone that he got lost in the woods, not that it wasn't so farfetched. Gareth would get lost in the woods any day, rabbit or not" She stuck her tongue out at Gareth, who waved his fist back at her. Isaac found himself caught between a war of insults as his two friends waved their fists at each other over his head. Laughing, he grabbed his share of food when the time came, and quickly got out of line so that his friends would get a share as well.

"Did not! I bagged it fair and square!" Gareth called out.

"Who are you trying to convince, me or yourself?" Jenna shot back.

That began a whole new war, full of words and insults and several inappropriate words and gestures. Isaac found

himself staring helplessly as his two friends did a mock battle with sticks, before calling out to them.

"I'm going to eat my food at the inn, kay?" He called out to Gareth and Jenna, "There's a dance starting. Why don't you two lovebirds get yourselves busy? You're arguing like a married couple!"

He then turned and ran as angry shouts came from where Jenna and Gareth were, both blushing like beets. He chuckled, tightening his grip on his food, and ran towards the general direction of the inn.

The inn was the largest house in the whole village. The roof was sloped and steep, so snow would not gather on top of it and cave in the building. Fancy decorations festooned the building, the candles inside giving off a soft glow through the windows. It was a warm and cozy place where visitors stayed, though there are not many nowadays, ever since the Empire, as they called themselves, took over Weyard.

His food was getting cold. Isaac hastened his steps, so that his strides were long and hasty. Just as he got to the door, he heard commotion behind him, and whirled around, surprised. Lights shone from the festival plaza, but that was normal. What wasn't normal were the strange shapes beyond the village gate. In the dying light of day, Isaac could make out lots of people milling around the gates, and surprisingly, the gates opening. His eyes widened. Visitors? Quickly, he started back to the plaza, wolfing down his dinner as he walked. So much for eating in a quiet place. But there were never visitors anymore. He could see people gathering in swarms around the gate, and felt curiosity mounting within him. What were those dark shapes?

As he got closer, Isaac hastened his steps, and as soon as the last of the venison was shoved into his mouth, he ran forward, eyes alight with excitement.

'Caravans!' It was a caravan of traders and their wares!

Caravans never came anymore, ever since the king banned traveling. Only recently, did the ban lift, only because economy was suffering because of the ban. Usually, caravans would skip Vale, being a small and secluded village hidden by mountains and forests with hardly a definitely route to get here. Isaac had seen a caravan before around four years ago, the year when the ban was placed. Now that there was another caravan, perhaps they would tell them of what has been happening in the world out there. It had been many years since real news came in through their gates. And perhaps there would be plays! Isaac was already planning how to spend his evening as he followed the crowd of people as they moved along with the caravan.

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It was nightfall when Isaac returned from the festival. The year-over festival was more successful than before, thanks to the sudden arrival of the Caravans. Apparently, he was told that the Caravans had come because the sudden blizzard two days ago had driven them off-course. After an hour of standing in the snow, watching the troubadours and their comical plays, the hot sticks of sausages were a treat. Swallowing the last of his sausages, he purchased three sticks of maple sugar candy from a merchant's stall, and eagerly bit into one, savoring the sweetness. Dances had been going on all the time through, and he could see the couples dancing round and around the bonfires. Strangely enough, he hadn't seen Jenna or Garet at all since their parting at dinnertime.

After musing over that fact for a few moments, the blond-haired boy shrugged and continued along his way. They were probably busy enjoying themselves at the festival or dance. He reached into his money pouch, and dumped out his remaining coins onto a gloved hand, counting them as they rolled out. Still twenty-three coins left. Pocketing the money, he decided that he would spend a few more of the coins at the inn, before going home. He was getting a little thirsty, after all.

He headed down towards the inn. Pushing open the heavy door, he stepped in, snow flaking off of his scarf, jacket, and his brand new boots, bought from a trader's caravan. Inside, traders who had finished their wares were around a large table, laughing and drinking and eating, conversing about the trades so far. He felt himself grin as he walked forward, taking off his cap, and dusting the snow off of it, before placing it on the over-burdening cap rack. The air was full of the greasy smoke of candles, and it made his eyes burn a little, though he did not particularly mind. The atmosphere was wonderfully open and happy, though a bit stuffy.

Weaving through the crowd of people, he set himself down at the bar, and ordered a glass of water, as alcohol was out of the question. Marne, his mother, forbade him to consume alcohol. Thanking the bartender, he tossed over a gold coin, and drank from his cup. Sated, he glanced around the inn.

The inn was an old inn, dating all the back to the invasion of Weyard about ninety years ago. It was built in the memory of Raith, the original founder of Vale, and had been in working order, even through the Great War fifteen years ago, and the Empire take-over, around seven years ago. Paint peeled off the walls in some places, and cobwebs decorate many of the corners in the old inn. The bar was the only new addition since the Empire take-over, and it stood shiny and

unblemished, looking very out-of-place in this inn of memories.

He turned his attention to the traders. The traders were a hearty bunch, laughing around the round table. It was pretty obvious that the traders had a caravan leader: the man sitting at the place of honor, with his regal robes and his many coin pouches. He recalled someone telling him that the man's name was Hammet, a renowned merchant from Kalay.

"Three more bottles of wine, if you may," Isaac was broken from his reverie by a small and soft voice. He turned, looking to his right where a young boy stood, placing a few coins on the counter. The boy bowed to the bar tender when he brought the wine, and reached for it, though he couldn't reach very far. His head barely reached the seats. Isaac quickly leaned forward and grabbed the bottles of wine, handing them over to the short boy. He noted that the boy seemed rather surprised that he had helped him, and then quickly bowed, taking the wine bottles, and scurrying towards the Merchant table, handing the wine to Hammet. The older man patted the younger boy on the head, and tossed him a coin, before speaking to him. Isaac could not make out of what they were speaking off, and quickly lost interest, turning back to his water, and taking another gulp.

"Thank you, sir, for helping me out," Isaac looked down, surprised. The boy was back, looking up shyly at him. His larger green eyes were slightly unnerving, as even though the boy seemed shy, he remained full eye contact with Isaac.

"It's nothing," He replied, reaching a hand down, gesturing for the boy to climb onto the seat next to him. The boy seemed a little hesitant, but did what he was told, his green

eyes never leaving Isaac's eyes. "You are not from around here are you? I haven't seen you around here in Vale."

"No, I'm not." The boy confirmed. They sat in silence for a little bit, until Isaac spoke again, realizing that the strange little blond-haired boy would not say any more.

"I'm Isaac," He offered as kindly as he could, smiling slightly. He figured that the boy wasn't speaking because he was shy. "What's your name?"

"I-" The boy gulped, before continuing, "Iv... I...Ireme. Ireme is my name."

Ignoring the stutter, figuring that it was just a slip of the tongue because of his nervousness, Isaac tried to keep the conversation going. "Ireme is an uncommon name. Are you with the merchants?"

"Yes, I am," Ireme confirmed, nodding his head.

"Would you like a drink?" Isaac offered, seeing as the boy looked still a little uncomfortable. When the boy denied the offer with a polite smile and a shake of his head, he continued. "So are you the son of a merchant?"

"No, not at all," Ireme shook his head, placing his hands in his lap, his back straight. Isaac realized how stiff he looked. "I am Caravan Leader Hammet's servant."

'A *servant!*' That explained a lot to Isaac. The mannerism, the politeness, the eye contact as well as the slight shyness. He continued the conversation the best he could. Taking another gulp of his drink, he spoke again.

"So where are you from?"

At this, the younger boy paled immediately. He opened his mouth, and then closed it again, causing Isaac to wonder about the boy, watching him with a suspicious gaze. When the boy did not speak for a few more moments, Isaac decided that this must be a delicate subject, and quickly tried to switch topics.

"So how long have you known Hammet?"

"Since last year," Ireme answered immediately, relief etched over his face. It was obvious that he was grateful in this change in topic. The younger boy finally broke eye contact with Isaac, looking down at the bar table, fingering its smooth surface with his finger.

It became apparent that Ireme did not want to speak any more. Isaac decided to let the silence take over. It wasn't an uncomfortable silence, nor was it a comfortable stillness. It was just a silence: a silence that just was *there*. Ireme did not seem disturbed either, fingering the bar table, as well as occasionally casting a glance towards the merchants' table, in case he was called. Suddenly, he jumped off from his seat, giving Isaac an apologetic bow, and sprinted off in the direction of Hammet.

Isaac was not surprised by the younger boy's actions. He was a servant after all. Isaac had never actually met a servant before, and he figured that they must all be somewhat like Ireme, though it disturbed him slightly that the boy was so young. Judging by his looks, Ireme should only be about twelve years old, and looked even younger with his short build and his baby-like face. Were all servants so young? Was it right to have such young children working like that? As he pondered over that, there was a loud thump, followed by lots of footsteps.

Isaac looked up, startled, as the merchants began to file out of the room noisily, getting their coats and hats back on. Ireme was there too, helping Hammet into his elaborate coat. Were the merchants leaving already? Looking out the window, Isaac could see the moon casting a baleful light upon the plaza, where the bonfire still blazed brightly. They couldn't be leaving.

Just then, a sudden movement caught his eye, and he looked on as Ireme waved to him, gesturing for him to follow, before filing out the door with Hammet in front of him. The inn was suddenly quiet as the merchants left, leaving Isaac the sole inhabitant as well as the bar tender and a maid scrubbing the table. Curious, he jumped off his seat as well, taking his hat from the hat rack, and dashed out the door after the merchants.

In the darkness, he could make out the line of people marching towards the bonfires far at the plaza. As he walked on, snow crunching beneath his boots, he could hear lots of loud laughter and talking. As they neared the plaza, he saw Hammet gesturing towards Ireme, and the younger boy nodded, before racing off at an almost inhuman speed towards where the caravans were parked. Isaac rubbed his own eyes, seeing the little blond blur racing towards the caravans. Deciding that his drink must have contained traces of alcohol, he ventured onwards towards the square.

The merchants were already there, the troubadours lined up with them. People were gathered around them, eager for more entertainment. Isaac wormed his way through the crowd, pushing past people and apologizing, until he got to the front. At the other side of the circle, he could see Jenna and Gareth waving at him, and he waved back with a happy grin, just as Hammet cleared his voice. The crowd ceased their chatters, and paid full attention to Hammet.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," He began in a loud voice, "It has been a wonderful night, full of festivities and joy. Alas, it cannot last. Tomorrow, we will have to take our leave at the rise of dawn," This was met with many groans, but Hammet shushed them with a wave of his hand. "But before our leave, I would like to confer with you about something a little more solemn, unfitting to this occasional, but nevertheless, the subject must be brought to light."

There were a few murmurs of nervousness from the audience, but otherwise, they listened.

"It has come to our attention, that the Empire has exerted its rule for too long. Its merciless tax collectors have been most uncooperative during the harsh years and its insensitive ruling will bring about the demise to our world."

The next lines brought many cries from the audience, none of them objecting the claim, of course. Isaac added his fist to the air, calling out his discontent with the Empire. It was a unanimous thing here in Vale, that the Empire is much hated. So hated, in fact that the men threatened to take arms every time the tax collectors came about. Recently, the tax collecting had stopped, perhaps because Vale was so secluded and perhaps because Vale was so violent, but nonetheless, life here had been a lot better than before. The Empire was hated, period, here in Vale.

Their cries were silenced when Hammet raised his hands again. He looked around the audience with a stern eye, before continuing, his voice loud and booming, carrying all the way over to the fringes of the crowd.

"We have endured this for too long. The Dragon riders have become nothing but lackeys of the Empire and the king,

Alexius II. We must fight back and bring about the demise of the empire, before the empire becomes the end of us."

There was a sudden unrest in the crowd as people conferred amongst themselves. Isaac knew the reason. The people, though they often wished for the demise of the Empire, were not sure if they wanted to get involved with this. Invoking the Empire's wrath was a risky thing. They have spies everywhere, always ready to flush out the traitors. In fact, Vale had decided that they had not been wiped off the map yet simply because they were not much of a threat to anyone. Sure, the townsfolk knew a little psynergy here and there, but not enough to pose a real threat. Isaac shook his head. Hammet didn't know all of this: there was no way in which he could have, and he couldn't help but feel sympathetic for the man. He had probably lost all of the trust the people had showed before by that one sentence.

Seeing the unrest, Hammet quickly spoke again.

"But we will fight fire with fire," He announced as loudly as he could, bringing back the people's attentions, "We will fight them with dragon riders!"

Suddenly, there was a deathly silence over the crowd, slowly, the people took in the words, and all of them glaring suspiciously at Hammet. Isaac found himself glaring along. The village had no love for dragon riders, and will never have any love for them.

Dragon riders were the main cause of their problem. When king Alexius dictated his rule upon all of Weyard, he had used the dragon riders to forcefully take children away from Vale and all the other cities on Weyard, 'Searching' them as candidates for his own batch of dragon eggs so that they would become his evil minions or the like. Felix, Jenna's

sister, had been taken four years ago when the riders came upon their village, claiming that Felix had some 'great power' residing within him, and forcefully took him away along with many other children from the village. He, Jenna and Gareth were only spared because they were on a study session with Kraden at Mount Aleph, and were not at the scene at the time. Isaac felt an immeasurable anger towards all dragon riders, and he believed that the rest of the town folk felt the same.

Feeling the heat of their glares, Hammet wiped a few beads of sweat off his brow, and proceeded to hold his hands up, backing away nervously. The Caravan Leader seemed very fazed by the village folk. "I-it's okay," he began. "We just need two of your children to-"

His voice was cut off by angry yells from the audience. Isaac found himself yelling along, protesting. Did Hammet know what they had to go through for the next few years? Children were dragged away almost every year to the darn citadel, every single year up until the year before, when the dragon riders ceased to come. Every year, the people have to suffer their children wrenched away from their parents, and watch them weeping, flying away forever aboard those wretched beasts. Isaac wiped away a tear from his face, and yelled along side of his fellow villagers. How dare Hammet even bring this up?

'This is sure to leave a bitter taste in our mouths,' He thought resentfully, *'The nerve of him, coming along like this and demanding for more lives.'*

"Do you know what you are asking of us?" Yelled one villager. "You are asking of us our blood and flesh! How can we grant you that?"

"And what do you know about a hard life?" Asked another angrily. "You're just a bunch of merchants!"

That statement was met with plenty of agreement as people began shouting all at once.

"You know nothing of battle!" Said one. "And war!" Said another. "And pain!" Said the last. This caused some more agreement from the folk. Isaac felt a sort of satisfaction as he realized that Garet was the only who quipped the last one, an angry expression on his face.

"We are not going to rush into battle and rescue a few darn dragon's eggs for you. We don't give a pile of dung for that sort of insane, selfish plan."

Nodding to the newest remark, Isaac was just about to yell out something, when a certain blond beat him to it and left him stunned.

"SILENCE!" Came the great yell. The village people immediately silenced themselves, staring incredulously at the small figure that had just taken hold of the situation. Emerald eyes glaring at them all, Ireme looked truly angry, panting hard and his fists clenched, shoulders up and tense. He gritted his teeth and glared at the village folk, his green eyes darting from person to person, making eye contact with every member of the audience.

"By Megaera's Sword, we are not asking for you to kill yourselves and sacrifice your children for dragon riders!" He cried exasperatedly into the crowd. "We just want you to see something that we have, and see if you think our plan will work! By Thor's Hammer, you people did not even give us a chance to show you our secret weapon!"

The secret weapon part got the crowd's attention. Isaac felt himself quite numb from all the excitement so far. How little Ireme had gotten control of the situation in a blink of an eye he'll never know, but he was sure a good attention-getter. Personally, he thought that the 'secret weapon' part of the speech was ingenious: curiosity killed the cat after all, and the village folk sure did not want to die at the hands of curiosity.

"Ah, erm, that's right," Hammet said shakily. He gestured to Ireme with a hand, giving the boy a grateful look. "Show them the eggs."

There was a silence as Ireme bent down. For the first time, Isaac realized that there was a pouch sitting right next to the blond boy's legs, and as Ireme undid the straps of the bag, he felt the curiosity mounting. Eggs? What kind of eggs? Dragon eggs? Some new kind of creature's eggs?

His third guess was correct. Ireme, before all the people of the village, proudly pulled out two oval-shaped eggs from the bag and set them before them all. They were both rocking slightly. One of the eggs, a mottled gray one, had a large crack on it, while the other one, a flamboyant red and orange one, had a piece chipped off, a claw pushing itself through the egg shell before the crowd's eyes. Isaac gave a startled gasp as the red one fell over, another crack appearing over its shell.

"Dragon eggs!" Someone next to him breathed.

Indeed, they were dragon eggs. They were hard to come by now, as all of the existing eggs were currently in Alexius' citadel, where he found suitable candidates who will bond with the telepathic creatures. These eggs must have been hard to get, as Alexius kept the citadel under close watch

with dragon riders and other guards. And before his eyes, he was seeing what no one from the village had ever seen: a dragonet hatching from an egg.

Indeed, when the first scale of the dragonet could be seen, the crowd held its collective breaths as the dragonet gave the egg a shove, sending red egg pieces flying everywhere. A leg, then a tail came out. Then, the dragonet poked its head out, blinking its red eyes sleepily. Judging from the hide and the horn shapes, it had to be a Mars dragonet, a dragonet aligned with the element of fire. Kraden had educated the village quite nicely about dragons. The Mars dragon let out a warbling sound and proceeded to crawl out of its egg, egg goo covering its little red body.

Judging from a distance, Isaac figured that the dragon was about the size of a large dog. It was strange in shape, it's back ankles backwards, and it's front forwards, completely the opposite of human arms and legs. It had a long neck, and its body seemed a little weird, with scales and a leathery substance. Its tail was long, and at the end, it split into two tips, both steaming off a little smoke. A few small horns protruded from the back of its head, and when it opened its mouth, Isaac could see rows of sharp teeth. It let out another warbling sound, cocking its head curiously at the crowd gathered around it, as if you say "Huh?" and sniffed into the air.

People cooed at the small beast, animosity towards the merchants forgotten. Parents lifted children above their heads so they could get a better view. Even though the village had no love for dragon riders, a baby animal was a baby animal, and the dragonet looked so innocent. Isaac could understand completely. The dragonet had a way of making things better.

Suddenly, the little dragon swerved, as though sensing something. It sniffed in the direction of the opposite end of the crowd, and let out a startled yelp, before scampering over. Her crowd followed it with their gazes, and-

Gasps could be heard. Isaac stood on his tippitoes so he could see, and when he did, he gasped as well. The dragonet was now on its back legs, eyes fixed adoringly on none other than Gareth. A forked tongue slid out of its mouth, as it licked the redhead on the cheek, the dragon being large enough so that its head reached Gareth's shoulders. Gareth chuckled a little, and rubbed the dragonet on its head, before looking around with an elated expression.

"I think the little critter likes me."

"Well that's obvious," Isaac heard Jenna retort. "It's slobbering all over you."

"I was always popular with the ladies," Gareth said, petting the dragonet on the head, which invoked Jenna to speak again.

"Have you ever considered that the dragon's a boy?"

The crowd laughed at this as Gareth blushed beet-red, before petting the dragon again. Suddenly, he let out a gasp, and clutched his forehead, his brow furrowed and his eye narrowing.

"Something's weird with my head," He groaned, all of the humor before gone. He rubbed his temple gingerly with his hand, and proceeded to sit down into the snow, as though disoriented. Ireme rushed forward to help him, while Hammet explained.

"That's probably the feeling that you'll get when you bond to the dragonet," He said with an approving look towards Gareth, "You seem to have a lot of potential."

Suddenly, the other egg let out an astounding crack. People turned to it eagerly, though some of them still hung around Gareth and the first Mars hatchling. Another red claw could be seen from the mottled gray egg as the dragonet inside pushed its way out to freedom. This time, out came another Mars dragonet, it's scales a darker red color. It let out a small growl, and suddenly, unfurled its wings. Immediately, Isaac figured out why the dragonets looked so weird: the awkward and leathery part of its body was the wings. Thousands of tiny blood vessels pumped blood through the fragile wings of the dragon. The dragonet crawled forward, eyes scanning the crowd. Unlike its predecessor, it did not sit around and look cute and pretty. Instead, it made a beeline towards another person Isaac knew all too well: Jenna.

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Several hours later, Isaac found himself in bed, brooding over the night's happenings.

Jenna and Gareth bonded to dragons!

A part of him cheered for his friend and their unbelievable luck. And to make things better, they were both his friends, in which he should be extremely happy. But another part of him was insanely jealous, as he wished he had a dragonet as well. Before the festival was called adjourned, he had asked Ireme if they possessed other dragon eggs, but that was met with a shake of the head. That part of him tormented him. He sincerely wanted a dragon as well, if only so that he could be with his friends while they trained. Hammet had wanted to train the dragon riders himself, as he knew a little

about dragons, and the village folk were very supportive of that, as after Ireme explained the situation to them, they would do just about anything for them. Apparently, the Merchants had found the eggs during their travels, hidden in a forest too dense for Dragon riders to see through. They did not explain what they were doing in a forest like that, but it sounded rather believable, so Isaac had let that go.

Ireme was a great spokesperson, Isaac decided. He had explained with great detail and plenty of suspense about what the merchants plan to do to the Empire. They had already two dragon riders up their sleeves, and after the two Mars dragonets matured, they would launch raids against the Empire. Of course, he said this with a lot more convincingness to it, so much, that all of Vale seemed to support their cause. The few grumblers were tossed aside as the village planned with the merchants on how to defy the Empire, believing that their four dragons will protect them. Isaac himself wasn't quite convinced, but he decided that anything would be better than the Empire's rule. So far, it had brought nothing but misfortune and death to their land. There have been reports of entire villages killed off because they harbored a dragon rider. Vale, being so secluded, though, would probably be able to escape notice for the time being.

But still, I really would like to help.

Indeed, he wanted to help. It seemed that only dragon riders and able-bodied men would be able to be a part of this grand plan. Isaac sighed, and turned over in his bed, hearing the wood creak. His room was a very old room; full of cracks and leaks, and it was always very cold, as he did not have a proper window. But their family was poor: they could not afford something more, so they had given him a giant quilt to sleep under. In a way, Isaac envied his friends. Not only

they had dragonets, but they also got to sleep with the Merchants.

His friends, he knew, were not much better off than he was. But he did know that since they have become dragon riders, or Dragonlings as the Merchants called them, they would be sleeping with the Merchants specially, as Hammet claimed that they would need his guidance. He would have to show them a few techniques with the caring of their dragonets, feed the dragonets, and also, their dragonets could not stand the cold, being Mars dragonets and all that.

Isaac knew he was jealous, but there was really no use in brooding over it. Maybe tomorrow, he'll speak to his friends about the dragonets. Turning over again, he snuggled himself into his quilt, and drifted off into a fitful sleep.

- - -

Link me up with Haze will ya, Luff?

- What's in it for me? -

Luff, I'm not joking with you! Just get on with it. I need to talk to Sheba!

- What's the magic word? -

Please! Now make it quick! I've got bad news!

- Okay, okay! Sheesh... Be a little more patient. You know how Haze is: she disappears a lot. Wait a few minutes. -

Fine, but be quick. I have to get this over with before they realize that I'm gone.

Ireme sighed, leaning against the wall dejectedly, his hands on his head. He sighed, rubbing his forehead. What a day, and what a bad day. It was awful. The dragonets have hatched. He shook his head. And they had bonded with those kids! In a sense, the mission was a success, but in a way, it had him worried. What were they going to do now?

- Okay, here's Sheba. -

Immediately, he could feel the other adept's soothing presence. Sure, Sheba wasn't the most caring of all Jupiter adepts, but she was the only Jupiter adept he knew, as well as the only person he could truly call a friend. Unless you counted Luff, but she was bonded to him, a relationship that was just a bit more than a rider and dragon. Sheba certainly didn't show it, but she had a caring heart underneath that stoic exterior.

But her mind bit. Hard.

Mission?

Complete, He responded immediately, letting her do the question asking. Sheba, he knew, did not like excess talk. She liked to get to the point.

Plans?

Confirmed.

Did you reveal yourself to anyone?

Ah...

He could feel Sheba's growing suspicion. She was like that, paranoid and suspicious. Ireme sighed.

Not exactly.

It's either you did, or you didn't. Fess up.

Okay, I sort of did. I met a boy with some potential. I think he's the one in your vision. He poked his nose in, so I made something up.

There was silence at Sheba's end of the mind.

So what's your cover story? She finally asked.

Ireme let loose a relieved sigh. So he was out of the danger zone. When Sheba was angry, she was really angry, and she could inflict harm, even if she's in the middle of Gondwan right now. She was very powerful mentally.

My name's Ireme, and I'm Caravan Leader Hammet's servant.

And you didn't reveal anything?

Nope.

Did they suspect anything?

Nada.

Ivan could feel Sheba's relief like a soothing stream of water. So everything was still going according to plan. Now, to break the bad news.

What's the bad news?

She read his mind. She just had to have done that.

The dragon eggs hatched before they were supposed to. They felt the presence of their bonded ones before they

were supposed to.

He could feel Sheba's dismay, but the dismay quickly disappeared, replaced with a mental smirk and a feeling of 'thinking'. It was as though he could feel the gears in Sheba's head turn.

That may just be to our benefit. So the plans still haven't changed for them?

Nope.

Okay. You're job's done. I think it's safe to call this mission a success. Get yourself killed or a good cover up story, and meet me back at base. We're report to Alexius ourselves. Can't let those stuck-up messengers get all the credit.

No, we can't. Ireme felt himself smirk along. Sheba could be so predictable sometimes, but he couldn't help but admire her ability to turn a thwart in plans into their advantage. Alexius would definitely be pleased.

And Ivan? Keep the name. Ireme was it? We'll come in contact with those kids again.

Roger that, Ma'am. And what's your cover-up?

Selaks. I'm off now. Meet me at base tomorrow. I trust you can do that for me.

Suddenly, Sheba's presence in his mind disappeared, snapping him back to reality once more. Ireme, or Ivan, as his real name went, rubbed his temple gingerly. Talking long distance drained him more than it drained Sheba. She was better at things like these.

- Ireme, eh? What a cute name! -

Shut up, Luff.

- - -

Cast thus far:

Isaac

Garet, rider of Mars ?

Jenna, rider of Mars ?

Felix, Missing

Kraden

Ivan, also known as Ireme, rider of Jupiter Luff

Sheba, also known as Selaks, rider of Jupiter Haze

Hammet, Caravan Leader

Alexius, King of Weyard, Empire

All characters will appear eventually.)

- - -

Random Profile:

Mars Dragons

Mars dragons are the most adaptable dragons on Weyard. Most of them are reckless, pretty much brainless, by dragon standards, and will eat pretty much anything, though they are strictly carnivores. Mars dragons are the largest dragons on Weyard, and they have the largest wingspans, almost three times their bulky build, which helps them stay aloft

longer than any other dragon. A Mars dragon, which flew for three days straight without landing, made the record of the longest flying time by any dragon. The average flying time for Mars dragons is about 12 hours, longer than any other dragon. This is because of their large wingspans, their love for thermals, and their ability to raise the temperature around them so there will be a thermal anywhere they go. They are also the only warm-blooded dragons, though they still clutch eggs. Usually, the female dragon will clutch about eleven eggs per clutch, the record being twenty-seven. The Mars dragons are not very maternal, but their offspring are tough, and usually survive. They mature at around two years old, and keep growing all their life. They can breath fire at the age of three months.

Mars dragons range from a fiery burgundy, to a light orange in color. Usually, their backs are darker in color, and their bellies are lighter. They are fearsome-looking dragons: their diamond-shaped head crest is three times as wide as a human, and twice as tall. They have horns sprouting out from the back of their head, and two tusks sprouting from their jaw. Their neck-ridges are long and sharp, and they have two horns sprouting from their foreheads, pointing forward. Their tails split off into two sections at the end, so that there are two tail-tips, but only one tail, and on the tip of both tips, there are flames, burning brightly. Mars dragons are not born with these flames, but gradually develop them, as they grow older. When they are young, smoke sort of spew out from their tails, and eventually, their tails will ignite. Those flames will be sort of like its anger-meter. When the flames are small and steady, the dragon's calm, and when the flames are large and wild, the dragon's angry. And when the two flames merge and burn into a dark bluish color, the dragon's gone berserk. In shape, the Mars dragon is bulky, with a large belly, and extremely large wings. They

are awkward and clumsy dragons, though are quite beautiful in the air.

For powers, the Mars Dragons control the flames. They breathe out flame, the colors ranging from a dark red to a dark blue, dark blue being the hottest flame that a Mars dragon can create. They can control the flame to a certain degree, but nothing fancy. Mars dragons have a tendency to cause volcanic eruptions wherever they go. If the Mars dragon lands near an extinct volcano, it won't be extinct anymore. Their claws are lethal, and so are their teeth. They have large fangs, meant for cutting up flesh, and large canines. Mars dragons can also bellow out smoke, though to a limited degree because that cuts off their oxygen intake. They tend to go berserk when their bonded dies, but that is only from the shock of losing their bonded and the anger that comes with it. They will cool off in a few days or so, and rebond to someone else. They are the only dragons that will rebond. Mars dragons automatically will raise their surrounding temperature, so in battle, they make the battlefield almost unbearable for any other dragon.

- - -

A/N: Fear the AU-ness of this story... It's like an Eragon, Dragonlance, GS crossover, but with Eragon-like background (The Empire, deer hunting), Dragonlance backstabbers, a touch of DRoP and GS characters and plot, pretty much. The Plot will definitely be GS. Pairings have not been decided yet... And, please Review? Pretty please?

I will also be adding random profiles at the bottom here. This chapter's profile is the profile of Mars Dragons. I don't know what the next one will be, though, so read to find out? Comments and suggestions are appreciated, and I'm not

sure how this is going to end, so if you have suggestions for that as well, I'll be forever in your debt.)

***Chapter 2*: Chapter Two**

Disclaimer: I don't own Golden Sun, Dragonlance, Eragon, Eldest, Raven Quest, DRoP (Dragon Riders of Pern) or anything besides this computer, and Sheba's OOC attitude.

Guide:

"Human speech"

- *Dragon mind speech (Telepathically)* -

'Human thought'

Human mind speech

- - Draconic Talk (Out loud) - -

Thank you to:

Darkjupiteradept

Joghurt

Dracobolt

Innocent Guillotine

For their reviews!

Now, onto the Chapter!

- - -

Kidnapping, Isaac's Past, Paranoia, and yet Another Dragonet

- - -

Isaac awoke to snow upon his face. The cold stuff was all over him, chilling him to the bone. Yelping, he jumped out of bed, only to jump back in as his feet touched the cold floor. The makeshift window of his room had broken apart, letting in snow, which had been picked up by the wind the night before, and tossed into his room. Shivering beneath his quilt, he wiped the cold snow and water off of his face, rustled his hair to make sure there weren't any ice there, and got out of bed again, this time cautiously. The floor was frozen to his bare feet, and he scurried to get dressed into his chore outfit, and rushed out the door to get ready for his day.

After washing his face with a bit of snow and brushing his teeth, he made his way down to the living room, where his mother, Marne, greeted him with a nod and set down a plate before him, urging him to eat up fast and get to his chores.

Breakfast was cold, but the tea was hot. Isaac gulped the tea down so fast, that it scalded his throat and left a strange feeling on his tongue, not that he did not like the feeling. The tea would keep him warm until he worked up a sweat doing all of his chores. Nodding thanks to his mother, he grabbed the hatchet by the door, all ready to go chopping wood for the day. He'll do his chores extra fast today, he decided, as he wanted to go over to Jenna's and Garet's to see their dragonets as soon as he could.

But as soon as he stepped out the door, he knew something was wrong.

The village was in a flurry of activity, people running around and shouting, and people gather in the plaza, full of shouts and threats of violence. Isaac heard a few vile curses in the

distance, as well as some new ones he had never known about, and he winced, frowning.

'What's going on?'

"What's going on out there, Isaac?" Came the question from Marne in the kitchen, voicing his own thoughts. Just before Isaac could answer back, Tafer, his next-door neighbor, came barging past him, cursing. Isaac had enough sense to grab onto the older man's sleeve before he could get any further.

"What's going on, Tafer?" He asked worriedly, "Is something the matter? Why is everyone milling around like that?"

"They're gone!" Came the frantic reply. "They're gone! They took 'em in the middle of the night! Oh, gosh, I knew them people were troublemakers, but no, there ain't anyone 'ere willin' ta lis'en ta li'l ole' me nowadays! Now look a' this... By Thor's Hammer, I'll beat them monsters to a pulp..."

"What? Who's gone?" Isaac asked, irritation creeping into his tone.

"Why, Jenna 'n Gareth 're gone!"

Isaac felt the blood drain from his face. Time stilled as a sudden a huge pressure appeared on his chest. Suddenly, the full impact of Tafer's words hit him, and he felt reality slap him in the face. *'Gone? No, that can't be...'* His hands trembled, as did his voice, when he spoke again. "W-what?"

"Gone, I say, Kidnapped! Jenna 'n Gareth have been kid- No, Dragonling-napped!"

- - -

It was three days since the Kidnapping, as the Valeans have begun to call the incident. None had been able to get over the sudden loss of two more of their children, and by the hands of what the villagers had deemed their allies. Everything was still in a state of confusion, and the mayor, Gareth's grandfather, was devastated. Jenna's family had ceased to exist a long time ago, all perishing at the hands of Alexius when they rebelled against the Empire because they took away Felix, but people mourned her loss as though she were their own children. The villagers then had a unanimous decision to never have anything else to do with dragons and dragon riders, seeing as they only brought misfortune and grief.

For Isaac, everything that had happened in the past three days seemed rather surreal. It was as though this were all a dream: a very cruel nightmare, which he just couldn't wake out of. But everything seemed real, too real, and everything was happened too fast and all at once, leaving him in the dust, dazed, and wondering what had just hit him. He had been walking around dazed for days, unable to fully comprehend everything that had happened. It was all a blur to him, nothing but a blur, which had just marred his perfect life. Everything was forgotten as he slowly sunk into his thoughts in a sort of a stupor, and in another sense, depression.

Isaac was only half-registering the fact that Marne was worried about him. He had seen out of the corner of his eyes Marne glancing over to him with that frown on her face every few minutes. In a way, it made Isaac feel good that at least someone cared about him, even though they weren't directly related to him, or anyone whom he could call his friend. Marne was technically a mother figure, but between the two of them, they knew that Marne wasn't a mother figure to Isaac, but more of a guardian, someone whom

housed him so that he could change his status of orphan to a child. But still, Isaac felt just a little better knowing that Marne was worried, even though he knew that, that was very selfish of him. He shouldn't make her worry like that.

Search party after search party had been sent out in search of the Merchants, who did indeed leave at the break of dawn, as promised, but with two hostages, which was not expected of them. But all the search parties had returned empty-handed and weary, speaking of the monsters, which roamed the woods and the lack of a trail to follow, despite the fact that the caravans traveled through snow. There wasn't a lead for the search parties to follow, and so, by the second day, searching was called adjourned, and the village was left to mourn for two more losses. People were extremely cranky and angry because of the Kidnapping. Several fights had broken out that day, and no one seemed to have enough will left to stop them.

Most of the people blamed the merchants. They knew that the merchants had taken away the two kids: there was plenty of evidence. Hammet did say that they needed the two kids, and the fact that the kids had slept in an empty caravan, which the traders had so conveniently brought along for their journey. Then, they pointed their fingers at each other, and blamed everyone but themselves for not noticing that. Still more people believed that the dragonets were to blame. They were the ones who bonded to their kids after all: one could have very easily bonded to one of the merchants. So in a sense, the dragonets had stolen away Jenna and Garet.

Isaac personally blamed himself for not bonding to a dragon. If he had, perhaps he would have been taken away, and not Garet, or Jenna, and perhaps, he would have escaped, or have found some way to notify the villagers. He knew that

both Jenna and Gareth were resourceful, but he had always thought of himself as more capable than both of them, not for any particular reason, or his ego, but just because that was pretty much the case with the three of them. Isaac had always been leader.

Well, he had nothing to lead anymore, so there was no use brooding over that. In fact, there wasn't any use in brooding over anything, as brooding would not bring Gareth and Jenna back. Brooding would not unbond them from their dragonets. In fact, if brooding actually did anything in the world, Weyard would have been long been destroyed by people brooding over the destruction of Weyard. And the Empire would not have taken over. Brooding changed nothing.

So sighing, Isaac walked of the house, scarf wrapped tightly around his neck, and himself in full winter clothing. Might as well make himself useful and not mope around Marne. She had work to do.

- - -

Since Gareth and Jenna's disappearances, Isaac had found himself wandering the woods more often. He had always liked nature, and had always found it to be a great way for him to relax. The trees seemed to be alive around him, whispering and branches creaking in the wind. Not that the trees told him anything: they just seemed sort of alive to him, even in winter. His boots crunched in the snow, leaving behind a trail of footprints, winding deep into the woods. Wind blew snow over his tracks, covering them nicely, so that he could journey on in solitude.

As Isaac walked, his mind began to wander, and inevitably, it wandered to the same subject that it had been wandering

to for the past three days: Jenna and Gareth. His two best friends were still gone, and he was still self-pitying himself for that. But they had each other, and their dragons, so they should be fine, but it was just the irony of the whole situation, which had Isaac wondering about.

Jenna's family died when she was six, and Felix had been kidnapped. In a sense, Jenna had lost everything dear to her. But now, six years later, Jenna herself had been kidnapped, along with her dragon, and Gareth, who was a great friend of hers, almost like a brother. And Isaac had been left here, separated from them both. So in the essence, Jenna had absolutely everything stolen from her: her home, her friends, even herself, by that darn Mars dragonet. Isaac felt that immeasurable jealousy bubble up again, and he gritted his teeth, trying to force it down. A part of him was actually glad that the two of them had been kidnapped: he would not have been able to bear them having dragonets and him without. He would not have fit in anymore.

In another sense, he guessed, he was just like Jenna. His real parents, Kyle and Dora, died fourteen years ago, weeks after his birth. Marne had told him the whole story just weeks ago before the festival, and though he was angry that Marne had not told him the truth as he was growing up, he did not feel any particular loss, as he couldn't miss something he had never had. Marne had told him that Kyle and Dora were war heroes of the Great War. Both had sacrificed themselves for Vale, and with their death, the war was won, and that was why they could enjoy such peaceful lives.

What was disturbing to Isaac was the fact that his parents were war-heroes. How was he going to live that up? Half the people in the village knew of his ancestors, but did not know of his connection to them. But what the difference was that now that he knew of his ancestry, he felt compelled to do

something about it: if anything, to make himself seem more like the son of Kyle and Dora, if anyone else ever finds out.

Isaac was so deep in his thoughts, that he almost didn't hear the rustling of a bush nearby. Suddenly alert, he instinctively reached for his bow, only to realize that he did not bring it: he was so out of it today. Cursing, he crouched, scanning all around him for any signs of danger. Monsters often roamed the woods, and he really did not want to be caught in a fight with them. He knew some hand-to-hand combat, but only a little: Gareth had always been better at those kinds of things, where else he was a lot better had using his bow and his sharp reflexes. Turning around on the spot, he examined the bush where the rustling sound came from. Silence.

Deciding it was just his imagination, Isaac straightened up, looking back behind him. The trees around him were unfamiliar, he realized. He must have gone farther into the woods than he really should have. Cursing himself for his absent-mindedness, he started his way back, following his own footprints. He had to get back in case anyone missed him...

Suddenly, there was another rustle, and Isaac whirled around again, his hands in a defensive position. But there was nothing behind him. Fear lanced through him. Whatever made the noise seemed to be following him. His heart pumped wildly, and he suddenly felt defenseless in the woods without his bow. What was he going to do now?

There was another rustling sound coming from his right. He whirled on instinct, panting slightly. His mind raced wildly. Should he make a break for it, or should he stand and fight? It all depended on what it was...

Abruptly, he heard a noise. This time, it wasn't a rustle, but more of a small mewling sound. The pitiful noise seemed to stir something within Isaac, and he quickly shook his head, touching it gingerly with a hand. A sudden migraine had popped up when he heard the noise. He winced and frowned, gritting his teeth. Was the thing messing with his head?

Then, there was a warbling sound, a sound so familiar, that Isaac felt a sense of de ja-vu overcome him. Where had he heard that sound before...

There was a sudden rustling of a bush, and Isaac felt his eyes widen through the pain of his migraine. Standing before him, just a few feet away, half hidden in the bush, was a brown shape, large green eyes fixated on him piteously, and small wings unfurled. Taking a step towards him, the thing let out another small warble; flapping its delicate wings.

'A dragonet!'

- - -

'Isaac's been out for quite a long time. I wonder if he's alright?'

Marne stepped out from the old house, shivering when the cold air came in contact with her skin. She shuddered, and looked around, green eyes filled with worry. Her blond hair was tied up in a bun, to keep it out of her eyes and to keep them away from her work area. There were tons to do around the house today, mainly because she had not been able to bring herself to make Isaac do the housework.

Marne knew that Isaac must have been going through a hard period of his life now. After breaking the news that she

wasn't his real mother and his father wasn't a merchant who had been attacked by monsters on his way to Kalay, she had thought that perhaps been too hard on him, and should have waited longer before he had told him. Now, she decided that she should have told him sooner, as then, that event would not burden him so much currently. So many things have happened, and none of them cheerful to the young man. If she had not told him the truth so late, perhaps he wouldn't be so down right now.

Speaking of Isaac, where was he? Marne frowned, narrowing her eyes. After waiting for him for a few more minutes, she shook her head and sighed, wiping her hands on her apron. Perhaps he had gotten sidetracked while taking his walk in the woods. Marne was worried. Isaac was so out of it, that perhaps he would not be able to protect himself from danger. Out of the corner of her eyes, she could see his buckskin tube hanging by the door, bow still within and his quiver of arrows still rested on the other side of the door.

'Isaac's strong and sensible', Marne told herself, 'He'll come home soon.'

Turning to go back in, she sighed. It'll be lunchtime soon. She hoped sincerely that Isaac would be back in time for lunch.

Suddenly, she heard a shout behind her, followed by running footsteps. Curious, she turned around, and saw a crowd of people, armed with pitchforks and swords and daggers and shields, and some with long sticks. Raising an eyebrow, she hurried back outside.

"What's going on now?" She called over to the group.

"Marne! Just the lady I was looking for," Came the response from one of the people in the crowd. She recognized him as

Eyrel, the bartender of the inn. The skinny man wormed his way through the crowd, and hurried over to her, tipping his feathered brown hat to her in greeting. Eyrel was ever the gentleman, all the way down to the roots of his blond hair. And he was armed with a pitchfork.

"Where's Isaac?" He asked curiously, peering into the house behind her. "I haven't seen him since yesterday."

"He went out into the woods for a walk," Answered Marne. "To clear his head, I think."

"Oh, Charon, no!" The bartender groaned, slapping his forehead with a gloved hand. His blue eyes were filled with worry as he turned around nervously to peer behind him, before speaking again, this time urgency lancing through his tone.

"Do you know why we're massing up like this? A dragon's been spotted in the woods," He hissed, "A scouting party came back with the news. They said it was a small one, but you know how dragons can be." This invoked a shocked gasp from Marne, her eyes widening.

"Isaac!" She breathed, as Eyrel nodded gravely.

"He might be in trouble, and we might be too late" He said grimly, voicing her own thoughts.

- - -

The dragonet was a small one, about the size of a dog. Comparing to what Isaac could remember of three nights before, this dragonet was a trifle smaller than the Mars Dragonets. He gasped as the dragonet trotted over to him, backing up slightly. The small thing warbled again, this time, with a slightly lower tone, as though asking 'You don't like

me?'. With a piteous look, it opened its jaws wide, revealing small and sharp teeth, and strangely enough, flat teeth at the back, which Isaac, from experience, could tell that they were the teeth of an omnivore.

The dragonet was covered in scales, larger than the ones on the Mars dragonets. Its large green eyes were innocent and, Isaac found himself thinking, almost cute. It warbled again, and trotted forward on unsteady legs, tongue hanging out slightly. Isaac did not have the time to back up when the dragonet reached him, and he gulped, wincing. Would it bite?

No such thing. The little dragonet seemed to purr as it rubbed itself against Isaac's legs, arching like a cat. Isaac found himself grinning at the small thing, despite knowing that the thing was a dragonet, and that it was just a miniature version of a dragon, which was a very dangerous beast. The dragonet was a grayish brown in color, with a few splashes of green on its underdeveloped neck ridges, which he could only see stubs of. Its wings were brown at the bottom, and when the dragonet folded them, he could see that they were green at the top. Camouflage, he decided: a dragon's natural defense.

His migraine had lessened a trifle, and he was able to think clearly. This was a dangerous beast, but it looked so harmless arching itself against his legs. He felt something brush against his mind, almost the feeling of curiosity, and he quickly withdrew from the presence, startled.

After he had cowered in the back of his mind for a few moments, Isaac realized that the feeling was gone. That made him think. Pensively, he reached out with his mind, and found out, to his delight and a little discomfort, that he could reach out with it, almost as though the boundary

between reality and imaginations had been broken, snapped like a brittle twig. And then, there was the feeling again, brushing against his mind. He felt an overwhelming curiosity, and startled, he stared down at the dragonet, which had been looking up at him all this time with those freakishly cute green eyes. Since when had dragonets looked cute to him?

Then, it struck him.

'I'm... bonded to a... dragonet?' He could hardly believe his good fortune. Well, not exactly a good fortune. Dragonets did take his best friends away... He frowned at the thought. The best thing to do was to probably leave the dragonet here and run home as fast as possible, or kill the dragonet.

'But with what?' His mind asked him cynically, *'Your bare fists?'* He quickly threw that idea out of his mind. Looking at the dragonet, he figured that there couldn't be any harm in keeping it. It looked so harmless rubbing itself against his legs like a cat. The sensation brushed against his mind again, and instead of curiosity, an assenting feeling crept into his mind. He looked at the dragonet incredulously, hardly believing that the animal was talking to him, in this fashion as well.

The feeling of assent quickly faded away into an immeasurable hunger. Isaac figured that the dragonet must be hungry. He didn't know a lot about dragonets, besides the fact that this particular dragonet was an omnivore, and was a newborn dragonet. He wondered if the dragonet could eat meat. The feeling of hunger was getting more insistent, though, and he grimaced. Thinking about it would do nothing. He'll just try.

'How am I going to get food in the first place?' He wondered irritably. He didn't have his bow and arrow with him, so he couldn't hunt. The hunger was getting more insistent, and the little dragonet was wailing now in shrill tones as it prodded around, looking for something edible. Feeling extreme pity as well as a strange protectiveness overwhelming him, Isaac sighed.

'Perhaps trapping might work.' That brought another affirmative feeling to his mind. He shook his head; it wasn't as though the dragonet could understand his thoughts, right? Right?

- - -

One snare and one rabbit later, the little dragonet laid there, its brown belly bulging with rabbit meat, and blood on its muzzle from the fresh kill. Isaac had successfully made a snare with a few branches, and had found a rabbit's burrow, and placed the snare at the entrance, before scaring out the rabbit. Hunger satisfied, the little dragonet seemed all ready to go to sleep, and it yawned, causing Isaac to chuckle a little. The little thing seemed so adorable.

He lifted the dragonet up and placed it into his lap. The little thing was actually quite heavy, despite its small size, and surprisingly, its scales were actually soft to the touch. Perhaps the dragonet's scales will harden, as it gets older. Shrugging, he patted the small thing on its head, feeling affection brushing against his mind. He was getting better at interpreting emotions from the small dragonet, even though it was still an animal. A smart animal, he decided.

'But no matter how smart it is, its still a baby, and I can't bring it back to Vale. The villagers will skin it alive.' Isaac looked down worriedly at the dragonet. Her certainly did not

want it to die at the hands of his fellow villagers, even though it was a dragon. It was a baby, and it deserved a chance to live.

'And it can't stay here. The monsters in the wild will tear it apart!' That was true enough. Even though he saw what the small dragonet could do to a rabbit, he wasn't convinced that the dragonet could protect itself out here in the wild. And plus, how would it hunt and survive without him? He couldn't stay here all his life.

'I guess I'll have to make a home for it here,' He decided. He picked up the little dragonet, which squirmed and voiced its discomfort at being picked up, and carried it in his arms while trekking through the woods again. He figured that a cave might do to protect it from the cold, as well as keep it protected from wild animals. He knew of a cave just behind old Kraden's house on the hill.

Half an hour later, they reached the cave. Isaac had never really explored it before, but he figured that no one had been in there since the Great War. He had discovered it on his way to Kraden's house for a lesson on Alchemy, when he wandered too far off the path and got lost in the brambles. It was a great hiding spot.

Traversing through the brambles, he came to stop at the cave entrances. It was a small cave, without stalactites and stalagmites, but with a few bats. Bat poop littered the floor further down the cave, but he figured that the dragonet wouldn't explore that far. Just in case, he unwound his scarf and made a makeshift harness to loop over the dragonet's head. He tied the other end to a bush nearby.

'That should do it,' He stood back, admiring his handiwork.

The dragonet seemed to like it too. It curled up by a rock near the bush, and lifted its head, warbling. Somehow, Isaac understood the little thing. It was asking why wasn't he settling down with it.

Isaac shook his head with a chuckle. He was going mad. The dragonet was just an animal: it couldn't communicate, right? All it had done so far was to tell him that it was hungry, and that it was curious, and the feeling of assent. The rest probably was just his mind playing tricks on him. But he felt it couldn't hurt if he talked to it.

"I'm going back home now, okay?" He bent down to the dragonet's eye level. Placing a finger on its nose, he spoke again. "You stay here."

The dragonet let out a small, questioning warble, and Isaac felt a brush against his mind again, full of curiosity.

"Why?" He asked the question for the dragonet, "Because I can't take you back home. My people don't like dragonets."

There was that curious brush again. The dragonet seemed to be full of questions.

"Because my friends were kidnapped because of dragonets..." Isaac felt a lump form in his throat. Now that he had bonded to a dragonet as well, he felt rather guilty for feeling happy about his friends' kidnappings.

The dragonet warbled another question.

It was a few moments before he could speak again. "That's enough questions for you," He managed through the lump. "I have to go now. You stay here."

The dragonet seemed to be about to warble another question, when it clamped its own jaws shut, and Isaac felt the feeling of assent in his mind again. Smiling lightly, he patted the dragonet on its head, and walked out of the cavern. It was time to go back to Vale.

- - -

"I'll join you! Let me go! I'll go and I'll find him..."

"Marne! Calm down! We'll go and rescue Isaac and..." But the blond-haired woman just wouldn't listen to reason. Two men held her back by the arms as she struggled; her blue eyes alight with worry and fear. She twisted and turned as she struggled to get out of their grasp, but to no avail. Eyrel shook his head and sighed. That Isaac, he was creating so much trouble.

"You can't come." He reasoned as kindly as he could, though his patience were slowly fraying. "It's too dangerous. You need to stay back."

"No!" Came the instant response. "Isaac! He needs help! I have to go!" Marne seemed desperate as she struggled there, almost glaring at Eyrel through tears. Tears dribbled down her cheeks and fell onto her apron, which she still hadn't removed. A cloak covered her back, thrown on at the last moment when she declared that she was going to help and kill that dragon and find Isaac.

"But we need you to stay back!" He shook his head. "What if Isaac comes back while we are gone? How would he feel if you were out there in the woods fighting for your life with a dragon?" He placed his gloved hands on Marne's shoulders, as though trying to push her down. "You need to stay back."

"No! If I don't go... If I don't go, Isaac is never going to come back!"

"Marne! Eyrel! What's going on?"

Everyone turned to the owner of the voice, including Marne, through tears and through anger. Suddenly, her eyes widened, and she let out a joyful cry, filled with relief and sudden delight. With a great twist, she freed herself out of the men's grasp, and ran forward, engulfing Isaac in a bear hug, sobbing all the while.

"Isaac!" She cried, "Isaac! Are you alright? Did the dragon hurt you? Why were you gone for so long? I was so worried!"

She did not notice Isaac pale all of a sudden. The blond-haired boy froze, looking at Marne in shock. He gulped, and with a trembling voice, he spoke. "W-what dragon?"

"There's a dragon in the woods!" She quickly responded, still hugging onto Isaac, as though afraid he would disappear. Sniffing, she wiped her tears away with a sleeve, just as the other men moved forward; curious as to whether or not Isaac had seen the dragon in the woods.

"Have you seen it?" Asked a man in the crowd gravely.

"N-no! Of course not!" Isaac managed to stutter. When the men gave him weird looks, he hastened to explain. "I-I guess I'm just kind of shocked... Dragons... They t-took away Gareth and Jenna a-after all..."

The suspicious looks quickly vanished from the men's faces, and they all nodded gravely, including Eyrel, though he still glanced at Isaac in a weird fashion, as though he didn't quite believe the blond-haired boy. Isaac guessed it was kind of unbelievable for him to be so shocked right now, while he

was so mokey just a few hours ago, but he quickly turned away from Eyrel. He might discover something if he looked a little harder: the determination, as well as the strength hidden in Isaac's blue eyes. The dragonet had changed him.

'But how can the villagers know about the dragonet already?' He asked himself worriedly, frowning slightly. *'They can't know about it, unless...'*

Unless someone had been spying on him. But that did not make sense, as they obviously did not know that he had seen and bonded to the dragonet. Plus, from the hubbub and the pitchforks, he figured that they believed the dragon was a full-grown dragon, and not the dragonet that he had bonded to. He was convinced that there was no other dragon in the woods, simply because there weren't any tracks, or any piles of dung anywhere in the woods.

"Isaac? Isaac?" Isaac was quickly shaken out of his reverie when Marne shook him slightly, looking at him with worried eyes. "Isaac, are you alright?"

"O-of course, Marne," He managed to answer. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"Well you were just staring into thin air for five minutes," Eyrel said with a touch of irritation to his tone. "Why don't you and Marne go back home and rest? We'll take care of the dragon." As if on cue, the men nodded grimly, brandishing their weapons.

"That's what we'll do." Answered Marne evenly, meeting Eyrel eye-to-eye. She grabbed Isaac's hand, pulling him along with her. "No objections now. It's time to rest. You must be exhausted from your walk in the woods."

Isaac could do nothing but to be pulled away from the group. As he walked off, he turned back, to see Eyrel looking over to the two of them with a suspicious glance, before joining the men with his pitchfork as they set off into the woods, which luckily, Isaac noted, seemed to be in the opposite direction of where Isaac had been.

As he laid on his old bed, Isaac pondered over the events of the day. Marne had really seemed worried about him: he had never seen Marne so worked up before, and it disturbed him. Even though it's a small thing, things have been out of sync lately. First the alleged merchants, who arrived this particular year, when they had not shown their faces since four years ago. Then, there were the dragon eggs; eggs, which had not been seen since the Empire take-over seven years ago. Marne getting worked up was another thing that was sure to bring upcoming disaster. And finally, that dragonet in the woods.

Isaac sighed. None of this was matching up. Something was up: he could tell. He wondered if Ireme had a part in the Dragonling-napping. The younger boy did seem to know a lot about dragons. That also disturbed him: to have actually conferred with someone who had a part in kidnapping his best friends. If there was one thing he couldn't stand, it just had to be traitors.

'First, I'll find out more about dragons,' He reasoned with himself, *'and become a dragon rider, if possible. Then, I'll rescue my friends.'* Satisfied with this plan, he closed his eyes. He'll go visit the little dragonet in the cave later. His dragonet, he reminded himself. But for now, he'll just rest. The day had been quite taxing.

- - -

Garet felt awful. His eyelids were heavy, his head hurt, he was sore all over, and he was slightly nauseated. But what was worst was that he was hungry. He let out a small groan, and turned over on his side, not wishing to wake yet. Sleep was such bliss. But even with his eyelids closed, he could detect light all around him, and he reluctantly cracked open an eyelid. Plus, he was extremely hungry. He could almost hear his stomach calling out to him.

He winced as light came in contact with his eyes. Closing his eyes for a few moments, he opened them slightly, and reached with a hand to wipe the sand out of his eyes. Why did he feel so awful? Maybe it had something to do with bonding with a dragonet. He yawned and stretched his limbs out, which he noticed, were a bit stiffer than he was used to, and scratched his head, which he noted that his hair was messier than usual.

Dragonets shouldn't be able to mess with his hair right?

Still dazed, he looked around at his surroundings. He was in a caravan of the traders, and light was peering through the window. He could see that it was just about noon, and fluffy clouds could be seen. Something was a little strange with the landscape, but he just couldn't put his finger on why. Shrugging, he decided to wait until his stomach was filled. Maybe he'll think more coherently with food.

Beside him, he could see Jenna's figure under a blanket, curled up, and looking just as frazzled as he was. Garet noted that she looked rather comfortable, and he decided not to wake her up. Plus, he wanted to eat first. Maybe he'll get more food if she stayed asleep. Rubbing his belly, he proceeded to get up, only to find that his legs were as weak as jelly. The caravan seemed to sway a little more than

usual, which was odd, considering that it was supposed to be not moving. Perhaps it was just his imagination.

"I see that you're awake,"

Garet whirled around instinctively to the source of the voice. He cursed himself for being so dense as to not hear the other person in the caravan with him.

The first thing he noticed about the other person was his eyes. They looked strikingly familiar, but Gareth could not put his finger on what. Next, it was the long brown hair, pulled at the back in a very loose ponytail. Somehow, the person resembled someone he knew. The man was a little taller than he was, and had a skinny build, but certainly not weak. He was dressed in a green vest and had a green cape, as well as quite the impressive sword strapped on his belt. And he was dressed as the part of a traveler.

Garet opened his mouth to speak, only to find his tongue to suddenly grow big and flabby, making it impossible to coherently talk. Something was wrong with him. Gulping, he tried again, and this time, he managed a word.

"...Food," he croaked. Right after he said the word, he blushed a bright red. That wasn't right. Quickly, he added. "Good morning."

The other man chuckled, very amused by his actions, causing him to redden even more. He motioned for Gareth to sit down.

"When you were younger, all you ever thought about was food. You haven't grown up at all, Gareth." He spoke in an even tone, as though choosing his words carefully. "And I suggest you sit down. You need to conserve your strength."

At first, Gareth flushed when the other man mentioned about his mind full of food. But after a few moments of thought, it suddenly struck him as odd as how the man seemed to know both his name as his behaviors in the past. His name could be easily explainable: the merchant Hammet, or Jenna, or even Ireme, that little short dude could have told the man before him, but only Jenna and Isaac knew of his childhood, unless... Suddenly, he knew why the stranger looked so familiar.

"Felix?" He asked softly, incredulously, forgetting the other man's suggestion of sitting down. "Felix? But... How? What? Why?"

"I still strongly suggest for you to sit down," Felix advised without acknowledging his words. "The caravan might tip, and you might fall."

"Har, har, very funny, Felix," Gareth replied sarcastically, stressing Felix's name, when suddenly, the caravan jolted strangely, and he let out a startled yell, falling to the floor of the caravan with a thump. Groaning, he rubbed his side, before sitting up, cross-legged. Felix had sat down already, chuckling at his expense.

"Felix!" Gareth tried again, now having doubts about the person's identity. "Felix, don't you remember me? I'm Gareth, and that's Jenna, your younger sister! We were good friends when we were younger..."

"Yes, I am Felix," Felix interrupted him quietly, but evenly. He paused, before speaking again. "And I do remember our childhood, as well as Jenna." He looked over to the sleeping redhead fondly, his eyes softening. Gareth took his pause to speak.

"But, aren't you supposed to be surprised?" He asked curiously, "At seeing us? I mean, you haven't seen us in, what, six years?"

"You don't look as surprised as you should be either," Felix commented flippantly. Before Gareth could respond, he spoke again, effectively cutting the other boy's words off. "And I was surprised to see Jenna... Three days ago. My excitement and brotherly tears have all been spent the first day, so now, I'm free to converse with you calmly." Gareth could detect some sarcasm when he said 'brotherly tears' and grinned. That was the old Felix showing through: Felix had always been the manly one, silent but quiet, and always trying to be tough in the face of danger and sad events.

"Well, boy, am I glad to see you! We thought you were a goner!" Gareth finally exclaimed, eager to upstage the older teen for once. Felix had always been better than him, at just about everything. "I've bonded to a Mars dragonet! He's right here, see..." He trailed off, when suddenly; he realized that his dragonet wasn't there. He remembered falling to sleep with it curled up next to him, but the dragonet was nowhere in sight. And Jenna's dragonet was nowhere to be seen either.

"Strange," He shook his head, puzzled, not catching Felix's amused grin. "I could have sworn that I left it right there... It should have waited for me to feed it before it went exploring..." But before the redhead could get up, Felix stopped him with a hand.

"Your dragonets are safe with Master Hammet," Came the calm response, "If the dragonet had to wait until you got up to be fed, it would have long starved." When Gareth gave him a puzzled look, Felix explained. "You've been sleeping for three days."

"Three days!" Gareth exclaimed incredulously, hardly daring to believe Felix. But it made sense: his body was out of sync, and he was in worse condition than he had been in ages. But he quickly voiced the question that had sprung up. "But how? I would've woken up in three days time!"

"It's because you were drugged," Felix answered evenly.

"Drugged!" But before Gareth could speak further, Felix cut him off.

"You've been drugged." He repeated, "but it is only to ensure your safety as much as our safety. We were sure that the drug would wear off in three day's time, and I had been waiting for you to wake up."

When realization finally dawned upon Gareth, he had a million questions to ask, but one really puzzled him. He felt something squirm queasily inside of him, and it wasn't just his stomach either.

"But... you're with the merchants... No, how did you get here? To Vale?" He asked fearfully, not knowing what to expect with the answer.

"Merchants? What merchants..." Then, it dawned upon Felix, and he let out an amused chuckle, before continuing to explain, "Ah! Merchants! It was sure clever of Hammet to disguise ourselves with a common name!"

"True name... But, what? How?" Gareth was now thoroughly confused. Seeing his confused look, Felix hastened to explain. "We're no merchants. We're rebels against the Empire, and we were supposed to collect two candidates for our dragon eggs. They hatched before they were due, though, probably before they felt your presences."

Garet did not even bother to ask what that meant. Instead, he focused on the matters on-hand. Quirking an eyebrow, he asked "But aren't you supposed to be with the Empire? I mean, they searched you and all that. And didn't you get a dragon?" The last question was when he realized that Felix had been taken away to get a dragon from the Empire, and to serve the Empire.

Felix chuckled at the sheer amount of questions Garet was capable of, and such smart ones at that.

"You've grown a brain while I was gone," He joked, before continuing in a more serious tone, "Yes, I did bond to a dragon, a Venus dragon by the name of Bane. And then the rebels bailed me out, and that's why I joined them. I cannot not let this world go to waste." He chuckled again. "And what a good thing that was. I'm finally reunited with you two."

"Oh..." More realization. "And we are..."

"New recruits, hostages, or sack of potatoes," Felix shrugged, "Take your pick,"

"I'll take the sack of potatoes," Came the sheepish response, "I'm kind of hungry," Then, he spoke again, this time with a little more fear in his tone. "But why were we drugged? Sorry, I don't understand..."

"Technically, you were kidnapped," When Garet looked horrified, Felix shrugged it off, shaking his head. "But really, we couldn't just leave you two behind. If the Empire found you, then you would have been either killed, or drafted into the army. And plus, we could always use another dragon rider in our ranks. So, we stole you away."

"Wait a minute... You mean all of this happened three days ago, and we're currently..."

"Moving."

Garet let out an incredulous gasp, and he quickly turned to the window, slapping his forehead at his own stupidity. That's why the world looked so strange out the window. It was 1) Moving, and 2) he couldn't see any land... Wait, that wasn't right.

As though he could read Garet's mind, Felix quickly explained. "We're flying. Dragons are carrying us."

When Garet let out a strangled gasp, Felix used his uncanny ability to guess at what Garet was thinking, and filled things in for him. "The other merchants are traveling by foot to our destination. We're flying to avoid detection from the Empire, as well as to speed things up." He then smirked smugly, "We're going to train you to become a true dragon rider, and I'm to be your teacher."

Ignoring Felix's smug look, Garet asked, "Where are we heading?"

"Kalay."

"Kalay!"

- - -

It had been a three day flight to their base, and Ivan was tired out of his mind, not only because Luff often tapped into his strength to fly longer than usual, but also because Luff's incessant chatter had all but driven him insane. Rubbing his sore temple, the duo landed, Ivan bracing himself.

The landing jolt was extremely uncomfortable. Jupiter dragons were the backward creatures of the planet, it seemed, as they, not only had strange bone joints, but also just *had* to land forefeet first. Ivan was nearly jolted off of Luff's back when they landed, and only his riding straps saved him an untimely death, not that he would actually die, not if he could help it. Having heightened reflexes because of bonding to a Jupiter dragon had its upsides.

- *Here we are!* - Luff cried in his mind, making him cringe. The high-pitched voice of the dragon was not appreciated sometimes. - *Home sweet home!* -

"Not home, you dolt," He spoke aloud, unstrapping him from his dragon. "Base. Don't get too attached to it. We might have to burn it when the time comes."

- *Burn?* - The immature dragon whimpered as Ivan jumped down its back, his Jupiter reflexes saving him a nasty fall, - *But I like this place...* -

"You like all the places we go to," Ivan retorted. If there was one thing that he learned from being in the army, it's not to get attached to anything. The blond-haired boy shook his head, brushing off his cape, before looking around curiously. Where was Sheba? She should be here already. She wasn't the type to be late.

"Looking for me?"

"Yeah," Ivan wasn't surprised when Sheba appeared out of thin air. He turned around calmly, his green eyes meeting her lavender eyes, and gave a grim grin. "You aren't going to welcome me back home?"

- - Base, - - Reminded Luff out loud.

The other Jupiter dragon rider rolled her eyes, before stalking off, motioning for Ivan to follow. The blond boy gave Luff a mocking reproachful looks, before running off after Sheba. They'll discuss the plans on how to attack their current mission, before reporting back to Alexius.

But boy, was he glad to be back, and not have to hide behind a different identity. It was great being Ivan.

- - -

Something was brewing in the air: he could feel it. The sea itself seemed to be agitated, as it beat against the rocky shores. The blue-haired man smoothed his hair back, before casting one last looking all around him. Something was wrong: he could feel it. Maybe it was the lighthouses...

- - Don't worry so much, - - Came a voice. - - It's probably nothing. Don't get too paranoid. - -

"Easy for you to say," He said irritably, "You're a mercury dragon. Dragons' have not much to fear on this world."

- - I have plenty of fears, - - Came the even response. - - The world is ever changing. Plus, what is there not to fear about the Empire? - -

"You're right, Serac," the man sighed, rubbing his temple. His robes rippled in the wind as he walked along the shore of his home, gritting his teeth. Serac followed after him, patiently, just like all Mercury dragons. "I spoke before I could think. I'm sorry. It's just that..."

- - The world is changing too fast, - - Serac ended his sentence for him, - - And the evil brewing in the west is not subsiding. - -

"At this rate, they'll tip the scales," He mused, looking out to the ocean.

- - Shall we? - -

"I believe so."

The duo walked back to their home in silence.

- - -

Cast thus far:

Isaac, rider of Venus ?

Garet, rider of Mars ?

Jenna, rider of Mars ?

Felix, rider of Venus Bane, Rebel

Ivan, also known as Ireme, rider of Jupiter Luff

Sheba, also known as Selaks, rider of Jupiter Haze

Who's the rider of Mercury Serac?

Kraden

Dora, Isaac's Mother, Deceased, Heroine of the Great War

Kyle, Isaac's Father, Deceased, Hero of the Great War

Marne, Isaac's foster mother

Eyrel, Bartender

Hammet, Caravan Leader, Rebel leader

Alexius, King of Weyard, Empire

All characters will appear eventually.

- - -

Random Profile:

Venus Dragons

Venus dragons are the bones of Weyard. They are tough dragons, with extremely thick scales, and a very heavy bone structure. Venus dragons tend to be patient, wise, and very thoughtful, though they tend to get lost in their thoughts. They are the oldest dragons on Weyard, being there longer than any other dragon race. Venus dragons have infinite patience. They will wait for a flower to bloom, and the seasons to change, all without a complaint. They are naturally curious, though, and tend to get out of hand when they see new things. They tend to ask too many questions as well. In contrast, their bonded are almost always a little impatient, wise, and a lot more practical to balance out their curious dragons. Venus dragons are the only dragons in which both the male and the female dragon can reproduce. Both of them possess female and male reproductive organs, though they can determine their genders just fine. At birth, they designate themselves a gender, and stick to it throughout their lives, though technically, they are androgynous. They are pretty adaptable dragons, and are the second most populous dragons on Weyard. They are omnivores, and will eat both animals and plants. Venus dragons clutch around eight eggs per clutch, the record being ten. They are dragons who will stick with their young at the first stages of their life, but will soon lose interest and leave the dragonet to fend for themselves. But Venus dragonets are tough, and will survive. Dragonets mature at

around two and a half years, and when they are born, they are born without their horns. Their horns will all sprout at around the first few weeks of their life, and will continue to sprout, though they will reach their desired length at around the third month of their life: around the time where their parents will leave them.

Appearance-wise, Venus dragons resemble tanks. They have a naturally heavy bone structure and tick scales, which cuts down on their flying. They are naturally the heaviest dragons, but strangely enough, are the second fastest dragons, second to only the Jupiter dragons. Their wings are naturally smaller than usual, and they have extremely strong limbs to push themselves off from the ground. The catch is that the older the dragon gets, the larger their wings get, but the heavier and weaker they get, so that by the time they are a hundred and fifty years old, they will no longer be able to fly. Venus dragons have more horns than any other dragon. They have a multitude of horns sprouting from their head, pointing backwards to protect their necks. They also have sort of a fan of bone that pretty much looks like a big, gigantic frill that frames their faces. They have three horns protruding from their foreheads, and a horn on their nose as well. On their wings, instead of one bone poking out from the joints, like all other dragons, Venus dragons have two or more horns from each of their visible joints. Their claws are also huge, and so are their canine teeth, though they possess molars and wisdom teeth, something that no other dragon possesses. Their canines are so large, that they poke out of their mouth, making them look more fearsome than they really are. They have three pairs of tusks protruding from their jaw, and a pair of very long tusks protruding from the sides of their mouths. Venus dragons are very bulky, though, and their limbs are short and stocky. They have lots of muscle in their back legs, though not nearly as much in their front legs. Their tails are shorter than

normal, and at the tip of their tails, there is a large mace-like thing, sort of like a round ball with spikes. Their neck ridges go all the way down to their tail, and are larger than the Mars dragons' ridges, and definitely blunter. Their colors range from dusty brown to dark green in color, and usually, their backs are a greenish color, while their bellies fade away to a brownish color for camouflage, though there have been reports of Venus dragons with the opposite coloring. Their tails are always brown with a green tip, though.

Ability-wise, Venus dragons don't look as impressive as the other dragons. They may have the best defense (nothing, except for Jupiter lighting, can penetrate through those scales of theirs), but they are lacking in the magic department. Venus dragons spit out large globs of sticky goo, usually sludge or a tar-like substance. It's bad smelling, but very sticky, and slows down enemies easily. You don't even have to aim. Just as well: Venus dragons are not known for their aim, more like lack thereof. They also have the untapped ability to heal in limited degrees, and that power can only be tapped by their powers (so they can't heal, but their partners can). Venus dragons are also known as the dragon of miracles. Not only plants magically sprout in their presence, they can also raise the dead. If someone has died and completely decomposed into the earth, they can raise the bones of the person/dragon/creature, and make it 'come to life' again. But this ability will only work if the person is completely decomposed into the ground, which means not a single scrap of flesh left on their bones.

Warning! Spoiler Below!

But there is one exception to this rule: Kyle. He raised an army of living dead, half-rotted, to win the Great War. But he was an exceptionally skilled rider, so he doesn't count, but Isaac is his son after all...

Warning! Spoiler Above!

- - -

A/N: Thank you for your reviews! - Smiles - I'm very glad that the story's interesting. Anyways, that was the second chapter of Drache Mitfahrer! This chapter was not half as good as the first one though... If you have any plot ideas, or any pairings, fire away! Comments and Criticism are greatly appreciated, so please review!

Well, actually, as for Pairings, I just couldn't decide, so I decided to try and touch on all the pairings I could, as in, throw in little bits and hints of every pairing. But at the end, I will have to pick eventually... So ideas for pairings will be greatly appreciated.